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(amended)
furniture, a saddle bag, a tripod, a lens, a lens cap, a casing for a burglar alarm, an automobile, an automobile door, a bonnet, a boot lid, an access panel for a black box, a sound proofing panel, a billboard support, a sole for footwear, a ski, an access panel for a dispenser, a part of an item of luggage, a building, a door for a medicine cabinet, a gate, a door jamb, an access door for a coin-operated machine, a tooth, a jaw, a part of a dog collar, a battery, an access card, a tool bit, a computer peripheral, a street, a door, a window, and a pipe.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-21, 23-26, and 40 were presented for examination in response to a species election requirement. Subsequently, the Examiner determined that claims 23-26 do not correspond to the elected species. Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-21, and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,728,217 to Fink et al. ("Fink"). Applicant herein amends claims 1, 2, 4, 9, 10-14, and 16, and adds new claims 45-53. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-21, 40, and 45-53 are presented for examination.

Rejections of claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Independent claims 1 and 14, as amended, recite, in part, a "connecting means comprising locking means movable in a deformable channel by remote activation means ... wherein there is **no permanent material connection**" between the connecting means and the remote activation means. A "material connection" is defined in Applicant's specification at page 2 line 40 – page 3, lines 1-2, as "a connection which has a physical substance, i.e., substance made of matter, and excludes a connection made through energy." Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as it applies to the amended claims and new claims.

In Fink, the activation of mandrel 81 is described at column 5, line 54 to column 6, line 43. In relevant part, switch 128 is connected to magnetic reed switches 129 and 130 in order to control movement of a piston in cylinder 121, which in turn is supplied with compressed air to drive piston rod 123 upwardly, to drive piston 67 in cylinder 69. This in turn raises mandrel 81, causing fingers 111 to expand into contact with the inner surface of tube 33, thus engaging element 35.

As described, Fink discloses a typical mechanical connection made of matter between the activation means and the connecting means. In contrast, Applicant's claims require "no

permanent material connection” between the connection means and the remote activation means. Therefore, Fink fails to disclose each and every element of amended independent claims 1 and 14.

Further, independent claims 1 and 14, as amended, recite, in part, “wherein in the locked position the channel is substantially undeformed in the region of the locking means and the locking means prevents deformation of the channel in that region.” Support for this amendment can be found at least in Applicant’s Figs. 13 and 14, and at page 21, lines 18-29.

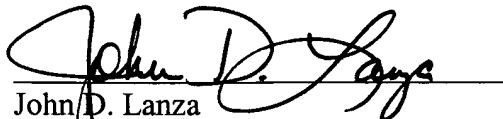
In contrast, Fink in Fig. 15, discloses that when mandrel 81 is in the “locked” position, the locking means (mandrel 81) has caused deformation of the channel, if this is regarded as the area formed by fingers 111. As such, the “channel” so formed, is deformed in the locked position, and not undeformed in the region of the locking means when in the locked position, as required by Applicant’s claims. Therefore, Fink fails to disclose each and every element of amended independent claims 1 and 14.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments to the claims and the arguments presented herein, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-21, 40, and 45-53, and that these claims be passed to allowance in due course. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned Attorney, if the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation would be helpful in expediting prosecution of the instant application.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A connecting means adapted to releasably fix a first element and a second element, the connecting means [including]comprising a locking means movable in a deformable channel by remote activation means between a locked position in which the first element is locked to the second element and an unlocked position in which the first element is released from the second element, [characterised in that] wherein there is no permanent material connection [(as herein defined)] between the connecting means and the remote activation means and wherein in the locked position the channel is substantially undeformed in the region of the locking means and the locking means prevents deformation of the channel in that region.
2. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 1, wherein the locking means is a locking pin, [disposed in a]the channel [with]has a base and deformable sides, and the locking pin is adapted to be moved within the channel by the remote activation means towards or away from the base.
4. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 2, wherein the locking pin, the sides of the channel and the base are of indefinite length.
9. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 1, wherein the remote activation means is adapted to move the [connecting]locking means by the use of energy [chosen]selected from the [following group:]group consisting of magnetic force, electromagnetic force, electromagnetic induction, high frequency heating and radio waves.
10. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 1, which further [includes]comprises signal means adapted to indicate whether the first element is locked to the second element.
11. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 1, which further [includes]comprises signal means adapted to indicate whether the first element is released from the second element.
12. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 1, which further [includes] comprises means for reporting damage or stress caused to the connecting means.
13. (Amended) The connecting means of claim 1, which further [includes]comprises encryption.

14. (Amended) A method of releasably fixing a first element and a second element via a connecting means, the method [including]comprising the step of applying remote activation means to fix the first element to the second element, the connecting means [being movable by the remote activation means]comprising a locking means movable in a deformable channel by remote activation means to a locked position in which the first element is fixed to the second element, [characterised in that the connecting]wherein the locking means is movable by the or another remote activation means to an unlocked position in which the first element is released from the second element, [and further characterised in that there is]there being no permanent material connection [(as herein defined)] between the remote activation means and the connecting means and wherein in the locked position the channel is substantially undeformed in the region of the locking means and the locking means prevents deformation of the channel in that region.

16. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein movement of the [connecting]locking means to the locked position or to the unlocked position causes no mark on or damage to the first element or the second element.